



628 Great Falls Rd.  
Sharkey to: rziek

04/16/2013 05:46 PM

Robin,

We unfortunately will be unable to attend Thursday's HDC meeting regarding 628 Great Falls Road. We have, however, been able to read your report that was posted online last week. Thank you for the thoroughness of your research. We are writing to voice to you, City staff, and the Historic District Commission our support in favor of historic designation of this property. This property and the house is a very significant gateway to the City of Rockville as well as to the West End neighborhood and its many historic properties.

Thank you,  
Rose and Bill Sharkey  
308 Great Falls Road

Good evening my name is Marsha Douma and I live at 616 Great Falls Rd. which is only a few properties away from 628.

I am testifying today to enthusiastically support the historic designation of 628 Falls Rd.

My support and interest extends not only to the characteristics of this particular property, but to the historic and residential statement this house makes as a gateway into the West End - Rockville's historic core.

As was so eloquently and accurately described in the staff report, this house announces by its mere presence that the West End is a vibrant historic residential neighborhood. Therefore I do not feel it is an exaggeration to say it is not just a house today which you are considering protecting, but an entire neighborhood.

Very much related to my concerns about what happens to 628, are my concerns about my own property, just a few doors down. Currently there exists a precarious balance between residential and institutional uses in the immediate area. Unless 628 is protected and maintained as a historic residence, it will be harder to preserve my own house built in 1901, as a residence, because it will be surrounded and overwhelmed by institutions.

As you well know, by definition, an historic residential neighborhood can only exist in any meaningful way, if there are a critical number of similar houses. If we loose 628 as a truly recognizable historic residence we are close to no longer having a critical core of historic residences in the immediate community. Once that is lost, we as a city can never get back.

In conclusion I urge you to protect 628 both for its own self, for the neighborhood' sake, and for Rockville's as well.

Thank you.

Marsha Douma

April 18, 2013

April 18, 2013

Good evening.

I am Regina Schafer and a resident of the Rockville West End.

- I was very pleased to read the well thought-out and detailed staff report covering the house at 628 Great Falls Road.
- First and foremost, I want to say that I am **IN FAVOR OF** conferring historic designation to the property at 628 Great Falls Road. We DO want to **MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF OUR RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY**—which is already compromised at this time—and this particular property has long been the *historic gateway* to the Rockville communities that are enveloped by the homes and parks of the Rockville Historic District. The sign next to this house clearly reads, “Welcome to Our Neighborhoods.”

I learned enormous lessons from my father who served for 30 years as architect, engineer, and master planner for the United States National Park Service—which included the making of President Abraham Lincoln’s Boyhood Home into a National Memorial. One must really look at the gestalt in determining buildings and land that really preserve the history of any particular time period.

We must do the same and formally designate as historic this significant home that was a vital part of Rockville’s history. In thinking of this and the recent loss by fire of the Woodlawn Hotel, President Lincoln’s own words about his boyhood home in Indiana reverberate:

April 18, 2013

**“Where many were, but few remain  
Of old familiar things;  
But seeing them, to mind again  
The lost and absent brings.”**

TESTIMONY OF PEERLESS ROCKVILLE  
REGARDING 628 GREAT FALLS ROAD TO THE HDC  
APRIL 18, 2013

Good evening. I am Mary van Balgooy, Executive Director of Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation. I am here on behalf of Peerless to voice support for historic district designation of 628 Great Falls Road because it does meet Rockville's criteria for historic district designation.

First, this house embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. It is a good example of a Gable Front and Wing house of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a vernacular style that became common only in northeastern and midwestern states. And in Rockville, only a handful of these houses from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century exist.

Second, the property sits on one of the main gateways into our City, providing a distinctive view to individuals entering it. We place a great deal of emphasis on our historical resources. It is what makes our City so special and different. Designating the house occupying 628 Great Falls Road as historic would provide a testament to those entering our community that we appreciate and care about our historical character.

Please, nominate 628 Great Falls Road for historic designation.

April 18, 2013

Rockville Historic District Commission  
Rockville City Hall  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville MD 20850

RE: HDC Public Hearing April 18, 2013  
Agenda Item No. V.A  
HDC2013-00611  
628 Great Falls Road: Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

Dear Commission Members:

On behalf of the West End Citizens' Association and the Rose Hills Falls HOA, we urge you to adopt staff's finding that the property at 628 Great Falls Road ("Property") meets Rockville's criteria for historic designation. In addition, we are providing you with supplemental information for your review and consideration with respect to the following two historic designation criteria:

**1. Pattern of Events: Exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities.**

A preliminary survey of deed, census and Maryland Historical Trust documents provides a fuller context regarding the Property's inclusion in a long-established kinship community that was located at the intersection on Great Falls Road and Maryland Avenue. In 1845, a "free African American woman named Ann Willson purchased one acre of land at 600 – 602 Great Falls Road and made it her home and small kinship community. The number of homes and the acreage grew with each generation as family members and other African Americans built in this area as well."<sup>1</sup> In the 1850 Census, Ms. Willson was identified as one of 1,311 free blacks in Montgomery County at the time.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest documentation that we have specific to the Property shows that in 1857 it was owned by Louisa Carroll Blair who,<sup>3</sup> according to Census documents, was a member of the kinship community. In 1910 Leola V. Williams and her husband Walter Fontleroy Williams purchased the Property following a tax sale. According to our research Leola Williams was Louisa Blair's granddaughter, and Leola's parents (Caroline Blair and Reuben Hill) also lived in the kinship community.<sup>4</sup> The Williams resold the Property shortly thereafter to William H. Trail, "a white Rockville citizen."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form: 626 Great Falls Road Section 8 "Section of Significance" (hereinafter MHT Inventory: 626 Great Falls Road). Attachment One p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> MHT Inventory: 626 Great Falls Road (Attachment One p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> MHT Inventory: 628 Great Falls Road (Staff Report p. D-10).

<sup>4</sup> MHT Inventory: 628 Great Falls Road (Staff Report p. D-6).

<sup>5</sup> MHT Inventory: 626 Great Falls Road (Attachment One p. 2).

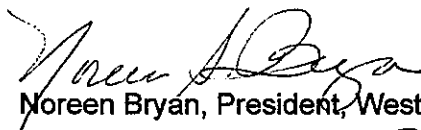
This preliminary research shows that the Property was part of the kinship community for more than 50 years. In our view, this historical information supports a finding that that the Property reflects the "cultural, economic, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities" not only for the reasons detailed by staff, but also because it was part of an established residential community of historical significance to the City and to the County.<sup>6</sup> The historic residential pattern of this long-established community between Great Falls Road and Maryland Avenue should be protected and preserved as a reflection of how this Rockville neighborhood was established.

**2. Represents an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.**

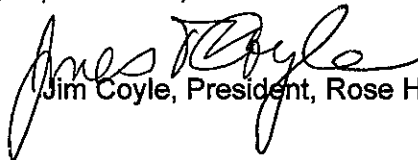
William Trail not only owned the 628 Great Falls Road Property, but also owned a 25-acre property to the southeast of Great Falls Road. The 1949 F.H.M. Klinge Atlas of Property in Montgomery County shows the relationship between the "Rose Hill Farm, Rockville Heights, and the Great Falls Road Black Community/Trail property[ies]" as they existed in 1949. See Attachment One p. 4. We believe that a portion of the 25-acre Trail property was later incorporated into Rockville's Millenium Garden Park. If so, the City has permanently protected this vista and maintained the open space confronting the Property in the same manner as it has historically existed – as an entryway to the residential communities that lie within this corridor. In our view, this historic relationship between the Property and the open space across Maryland Avenue further solidifies the Property's singular physical characteristic as a physical feature of the community *and* as it is connected to the broader landscape along Maryland Avenue.

In conclusion, we ask that you recommend to the Mayor and Council that the property at 628 Great Falls Road be designated as a historic property for the reasons recommended by staff and additionally for the reasons explained above. If you are not persuaded by the information that you have at the time of the hearing, we respectfully request that you hold the record open for 30 days in order to allow us time to further supplement the record with additional research, as there has been little time for us to review and respond to this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,



Moreen Bryan, President, West End Citizens' Association



Jim Coyle, President, Rose Hills Falls HOA

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<sup>6</sup> The Rockville kinship community included many residents with the family name of "Dove," and evidence suggests that a number of these family members settled in the kinship community known as "Scotland," which was settled established on Seven Locks Road in Potomac.